

# DECEMBER NEWSLETTER 2020



**Partners in Aid**

Enduring, Capable Communities

**DECEMBER  
APPEAL**  
Donate today!

## Happy Diwali/Christmas/Mawlid, an-Nabi!

To our Partners in Aid supporters,

It has been a challenging year and hard to believe it is already nearly coming to an end with the holiday season upon us. The COVID-19 pandemic continues to sweep the globe and while Australia is experiencing only a handful of new cases a day, case numbers continue to rise in many parts of the United States. The United Kingdom braces itself for a winter lockdown.

While there has been some positive news about a vaccine being available early 2021, the pandemic is far from over and expected to continue well into next year. Each year Partners in Aid continues to assist disadvantaged people in our projects in India, Bangladesh and the Philippines. Case numbers in India have declined significantly from over 90,000 new cases a day in September which is very positive, and cases in Bangladesh and Philippines have plateaued. Diwali festival in November in India was very different this year, with fairs and events being replaced with at home dinners and street fireworks.

The virus has impacted some of our projects and sponsorships but despite these set backs, we continue to play an important role ensuring that the people we support have access to health services, education and food and our donations are still required. Some of our projects have had no updates since our last newsletter.

We ask our donors and members, if they are able, to continue their support of Partners in Aid, and contribute to our December Appeal so we can continue to help those most in need. Any contribution no matter how small, will allow us to continue supporting our communities overseas now and through the future.

We hope that all our supporters have a joyous summer break and New Year. We look forward to re-connecting face-to-face as soon as we are able.



**Partners in Aid**

We've refreshed our  
logo!  
Let us know what you  
think by sending us  
an e-mail at  
[admin@partnersinaid.org.au](mailto:admin@partnersinaid.org.au)

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# CHRISTMAS GIFTS AND DONATIONS



**DECEMBER  
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Donate today!

This Christmas why not consider making a donation to one of our projects as an alternative to buying a traditional gift for family or friends? You'll be making a very positive difference to the lives and prospects of disadvantaged and vulnerable people, who have faced an incredibly challenging 2020 during the pandemic.

You can also make a general project donation if you prefer or set up a child education sponsorship at ABWU or SEDS.

A general donation will be used in supporting any of our projects needing funds at the time of your donation.

## BANK TRANSFER & CHEQUE

EFT details: Partners in Aid, BSB/Acct: 033686/162354, with your surname as reference. Please email [admin@partnersinaid.org.au](mailto:admin@partnersinaid.org.au) to arrange a receipt and confirm where you would like the donation directed.

If paying by cheque, please make it out to Partners in Aid, and post to PO Box 42, Narre Warren LPO, VIC 3805

Name for receipt: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email (for internal use and occasional updates): \_\_\_\_\_

Gifts of \$2.00 or more are tax deductible (a receipt will be issued).

**Membership**  
\$25 per annum

## **SEDS** **Agriculture,** **India**

**\$10 could buy 1000 Fish fingerlings  
to stock tanks**

**\$50 could employ a SEDS staff  
member for 1 month**

**\$200 could hire a tractor for 1 week**

## **Symbiosis,** **Bangladesh**

**\$10 could buy school stationery  
for 1 week**

**\$30 could buy tailoring supplies**

**\$200 could buy a sewing  
machine**

## **Sinangpad,** **Philippines**

**\$35 could buy materials to enable  
a family to build a household  
sanitary toilet**

**\$50 could buy health training for  
communities**

**Child  
sponsorship**  
SEDS / All Bengal  
Women's Union  
\$260 per child per year





## HOW YOU CAN GIVE

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### HOW YOU CAN GIVE:

Because Partners in Aid has no paid staff, our overheads are very low. This means nearly all the money donated goes directly to our partner organisations. All donations are tax deductible. There are a number of ways you can support Partners in Aid's projects, including making a general donation, making a donation directly to one of our projects, buying items from one of our partners or leaving a gift in your will. Please send money via:

- Leave a bequest
- Direct Bank Transfer
- Cheque
- Online at My Cause or GiveNow
- Purchase from one of our partners

### BEQUESTS

A gift in your will, no matter what size will make a significant difference to the work of Partners in Aid. You can bequest cash, a percentage of your estate or a residuary gift. All bequests are welcome and there are no fees. We use bequests to assist with the continual development and improvements of all our programs. We recommend that you seek professional advice from your solicitor or financial advisor in planning a bequest. For more information or a confidential conversation please contact Cecily or Lyn on 03 9704 6315 or e-mail [admin@partnersinaid.org.au](mailto:admin@partnersinaid.org.au).

### BANK TRANSFER OR CHEQUE

Details to donate through bank transfer or cheque can be found on the previous page. Please ensure that bank transfers have the details of your name and the direction of your donation. If forwarding a cheque, fill in newsletter page or write a note with name and direction of your donation or email [admin@partnersinaid.org.au](mailto:admin@partnersinaid.org.au) to advise your payment and where you would like it allocated.

### ONLINE AT MY CAUSE / GIVENOW

- You can make a one off or regular tax-deductible donation through platform My Cause or Give Now.
  - My Cause: <https://www.mycase.com.au/charity/25612/PartnersinAidLtd>.
  - Give Now: <https://www.givenow.com.au/partnersinaid>.

### GOODWILL WINE PARTNERSHIP

You can also enjoy quality wine and support Partners in Aid projects at the same time. For every case of wine sold, a proportion goes directly to Partners in Aid, with no overhead costs. Thinking about giving yourself a treat during lockdown? Goodwill are popping in a roll of Who Gives A Crap toilet paper and a 50ml bottle of hand sanitiser in every order of their Lockdown Mix. You can order wines or buy gift vouchers. Place order here and support Partners in Aid: <http://goodwillwine.com.au/charities/partners-in-aid>

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## Love cooking? Get ready to cook up a storm with Partners in Aid! December 13th 2020, 2pm

Join our All Bengal Women's Union (ABWU) Project Coordinator, Anne-Marie Maltby as she leads us through Partners in Aid's first of many online cooking classes. We will send everyone who registers a list of ingredients so they can buy them beforehand and join us at 2pm on Sunday 13 December online.

You can also hear an update on the programs we support in the Philippines, India and Bangladesh, and how they have coped with the coronavirus pandemic.

To register your attendance at this free event email [admin@partnersinaid.org.au](mailto:admin@partnersinaid.org.au) and we will send you the link, and the ingredients. See you there!



## FACEBOOK - PLEASE FOLLOW US!

WE NEED YOUR HELP

We've recently relaunched our Facebook page. You can now keep up to date with our projects on Social Media and help us communicate to a wider audience about all our projects. How?

Please Like and Follow our Facebook page.  
<https://www.facebook.com/PartnersInAid/>

If you already follow our page, thank you. Please help us by inviting your friends to also follow our page. You can do this by clicking on the share symbol below. We appreciate your continued support of Partners in Aid!





## INDIA: SEDS

LYN PICKERING & AMANDA STONE

Partners in Aid works with the Social Education and Development Society (SEDS) in Andhra Pradesh, India to educate communities and help protect natural resources with water management and reforestation programs. Partners in Aid has funded the de-silting of 3-4 tanks each year since the 1990's.

In addition to the tank de-silting project, a child sponsorship program was set up with SEDS in late 1994, when visiting board members recognised that the majority of the children in the area did not attend School. Sponsorship of a child covers expenses including books, uniforms, shoes, school fees, monthly visits to SEDS for cultural and sporting activities, and health checks.

## IN MEMORY OF SEDS FOUNDER

IAN PICKERING MEMORIES - I first met Rajen Joshua in November 1992. This was my first trip outside of Australia, and it was a double visit to project work of AAA (Action Aid Australia) in both India and Bangladesh (the previous name of Partners in Aid).

I was very enthusiastic about the prospect of seeing Rajen's reforestation project closely following my retirement as Education officer of the Natural Resources Conservation League of Victoria (1983-1991).

Not only were my interests in Rajen's reforestation, plus soil and water conservation projects well rewarded, but I was very impressed by the attitude and philosophy of Rajen and his wife Manil. In contrast to previous AAA projects overseas, Rajen at SEDS (Social Education and Development Society) was a self determining leader, rather than an appointed staff member of AAA.

My second visit to SEDS in India, was in September 1994, (the year of the plague). I believed that Lyn would share my enthusiasm for the project, and would feel comfortable mixing with Rajen and Manil and their associates.

" Rajen's wife Manil has always played an enormous part in the success of SEDS, and their two adult children, Rohith and Rashna are well prepared to carry that legacy forward"

As at 25 Sept 2020, Wiki, WHO

RAJEN JOSHUA

DATE OF BIRTH – 21ST NOVEMBER, 1945  
DATE OF DEATH – 26TH OCTOBER, 2020  
DATE SEDS STARTED OFFICIALLY WAS 30TH DECEMBER, 1980



ON 26TH OCTOBER, CO-FOUNDER OF SEDS RAJEN JOSHUA PASSED AWAY AFTER A PERIOD OF ILL-HEALTH.

ALTHOUGH RAJEN HAD RETIRED FROM ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT IN THE DAY TO DAY MANAGEMENT OF SEDS, HIS VISION, WISDOM AND EXPERIENCE LIVE ON IN THE WORK AND DIRECTION UNDERTAKEN BY THIS PIONEERING AND HIGHLY REGARDED NGO WHICH WE ARE PROUD TO PARTNER WITH.

It is now 2020, and Lyn and I have completed 20 trips to SEDS, 17 of the trips together. We have now spent more than one year of our lives at SEDS, and have gained enormous respect and trust of Rajen and Manil. Rajen and Manil have also become close friends.

Over the past 28 years we have seen many changes. The physical benefits of reforestation and soil and water conservation soon evolved into tank desilting projects. Central southern India is a land of droughts and flooding rains. Back in about 1400 AD, an inspired Emperor decided to make a change. Some steep valleys and many minor depressions were converted into tanks, or dams by our way of thinking. Using the best machinery of the time, elephants, were used to build walls made of large boulders and compressed earth.

This had the benefit of storing flood waters for use in drought times. Over many years top soil from the hillsides has washed into the tanks. During dry seasons, SEDS, through Rajen's insight, have organised projects of desilting. This involves removing silt (topsoil) from the tank and redistributing it to agricultural lands. This has proven to significantly improve productivity, while also increasing water storage capacity. These, and other projects are highly valuable, but this is only part of the story. SEDS is the Social Education and Development Society.

When determining which villages would receive and benefit from a tank desilting project, Rajen requested that a tank management committee be established and insisted that representation on this committee would include women. Not all villages accepted these rules, at least not in the first opportunity. Other social and educational programs initiated by SEDS were the Women's Self Help Groups (micro credit management schemes), and Farmers Co-operatives – which included woman farmers who are just as vocal as their male counterparts.

Within the concept of sustainable agriculture, farmers are encouraged to experiment, and to share their successes with other farmers. Agricultural practices are changing for the better, and green manure (compost), animal manure, and silt from old tanks are critical.

One of the programs that Lyn and I find most exciting is the children's educational sponsorship program. The program was established to ensure that children from poor families could have at least a primary school education. Some children have made commendable achievements, but I will leave that to Lyn to write about. The thing that makes it so satisfying with PIA and SEDS, is that we see our project and sponsorship programs as providing disadvantaged people with opportunities to develop their own potential.

This is not charity, it is Social and Educational Development, and the legacy that Rajen has initiated will continue to grow, even after his loss. Rajen was a remarkable man. His fore sight, courage and drive overcame many challenges. Rajen's life's work has given hope and optimism to the underprivileged. He will long be remembered.

## LYN PICKERING MEMORIES -

My first visit with Ian was in September 1994. Being caught up in the plague at the end of our visit, saw us return to Australia a few days late, once India allowed planes to fly again. It was challenging at first, but time spent at SEDS more than made up for any fears I might have had.

Each day about 9.30 am we would head out to the field with Rajen in a jeep (those first few visits the jeeps had no windows, and then no air conditioning, but that did improve after several visits). There were very few formal roads in the area which meant a few sore backs, but each day we did it again for up to five hours at a time, returning for late lunch at SEDS. India is a fascinating country, with a long history, but people are the same wherever we go. We just have to look for similar minded people and for Ian, he had certainly found a kindred spirit in Rajen. This began a journey for us where our families have come together, not just as acquaintances, but as good friends, and therefore they have become part of our extended family.

Rajen was always pleased to show us the progress being made in the many villages, and his enthusiasm for this work certainly impacted on both Ian and me. He was highly respected and regarded by the local communities in the project area and beyond.

Small rural schools were in the area we visited to look at the project work and determine what the next project might be, with support from AusAID as it was known then. We came across a number of schools, but no students, and as I wished to know a little more about schooling in India, we stopped to look around.

Later that day, we sat and talked about the possibility of sponsoring children in the areas where the watershed development and reforestation programs were being conducted. Rajen and Manil were both keen to pursue this as their ideas and vision was of an holistic approach to development work.

Twenty eight years later, more than 600 students ranging in age from five to 16 have mainly completed their schooling to Year 10. Students are now choosing to continue to Year 11 and 12 and University and this is now done with Government support.

The early vision of “greening the hills”, which Rajen initiated, remains the main focus of the work at SEDS, but educating the children who previously may have missed out on an education has also had a positive impact on the local communities. It is rewarding to see students return to SEDS to say thank you for opportunities they were given. The students now have greater expectations than those of their parents and grandparents.

Rajen’s wife Manil has always played an enormous part in the success of SEDS, and their two adult children, Rohith and Rashna are well prepared to carry that legacy forward, and maybe they will do it in a different way. They like so many others, have benefitted from loving and knowing RAJEN, a man who had an incredible vision to green the hills of Penukonda, and who has done just that and taken so many people on that journey of discovery.

## BANGLADESH: SYMBIOSIS PROJECT

PROJECT DIRECTOR: ROGER HUGHES

Partners in Aid works with Symbiosis in Bangladesh on two projects which aim to build the capacity, resilience and socio-economic status of impoverished communities. The Bangladesh Garment Training Project (GTP) provides vocational training in sewing, with the majority of participants being women. The Jamuna River Development Project (JRDP) aims to help communities living on islands in the Jamuna River through education, improved literacy, micro-finance and health projects.

Talking to Bangladeshi friends in Australia, who are in communication with family and friends in Bangladesh, I gather that there is a strong belief that the spread of the corona virus is much worse than the official figures suggest, and the impact of the virus is probably at least as devastating in Bangladesh as in India. Just after the previous newsletter was sent, we received a report on each of our projects saying that the staff were back at work on both projects, and a week ago we have received a further report on the JRDP project showing good results this last quarter. As hoped in the previous newsletter, the island on which this project runs has been extremely fortunate in not being hit by the virus although project work was greatly interrupted there during the lockdown. Information on our activities on the mainland (off our island on the Jamuna River) remains sketchy.

Thanks to a lack of the virus on the island, the Jamuna River Development Project (JRDP) has managed to recover well during the quarter July-September. For simplicity, this project has been combined with the work done in the adjacent area of other supporting organisations. Contributions by Partners in Aid constitute approximately one half of the total cost of this project, and so donors can interpret their contributions as supporting about half the work reported. To indicate this recovery, I give you a few some of the achievements for the quarter and the shortfall on the original target planned before the virus.

Activity	Actual	Originally predicted
Enrolment in Primary School	378	750
Antenatal and Postnatal check-ups	0	50
Tree planting	50	50
Awareness training COVID	35,566	3,500
Taka saved at savings group meetings	1,365,597	100,200



Trying to save the school from the floods

In addition to the troubles caused by the virus, there has been extensive flooding caused by the very strong monsoonal rains. These floods have again threatened a school on the island, requiring considerable effort. The feeling for the effect of this flooding is probably best conveyed by the photographs rather than words. Life has been a struggle in Bangladesh this year, a year of hardship like few others, but the community on the island have survived well. I fear that when I receive clearer news of our activities on the mainland of Bangladesh the story may be a bit more troubling. We await a detailed report on our textile training project.



## PHILIPPINES: SINANGPAD HEALTHY VILLAGE PROJECT

PROJECT DIRECTOR: CECILY NEIL

The Sinangpad Healthy Village Project has been ongoing now for nearly twelve years. Located in the Kalinga Province, a mountainous province in the north of the Philippine's main island, Luzon. The project helps enable poor, remote communities to make the most of their human potential, capabilities and resources by promoting behavioural changes intended to reduce the incidence of environment-related food, water-borne and vector-borne diseases, especially those affecting infants. Small grants to communities enable villagers to purchase construction materials to build simple infrastructure such as toilets, thus removing barriers to behavioural change.

Health services in Kalinga are still working to contain the pandemic, where, at the moment, typhoons and COVID-19 are becoming part of everyday life. As a result, the usual work of the Sinangpad Association, enabling communities to improve their health situation by eliminating local environmental sanitation risks, has been temporarily suspended.

However, a grant provided to the Sinangpad Association by Partners in Aid has enabled the Sinangpad Healthy Village Project to overcome some of the shortages in protective gear available to local health workers in Kalinga. After liaising with the Provincial Health Office to determine what was most needed, the Association has purchased face masks and shields, haircaps, shoe covers, thermal sensors and hand sanitizer, now in use by front line health workers, quite a few of whom are themselves Sinangpad members.

Our thoughts are with the people in Kalinga, especially the colleagues with whom we have now worked for many years, and our hopes that the coming new year will be a much better year than 2020.



PPE Equipment



PPE equipment

## OIL PAINTING LIMITED OFFER

We currently have a limited offer from our board member Roger Hughes who is offering to paint oil portraits of our sponsored children. If you would like an oil painting of your sponsored child please contact us at [admin@partnersinaid.com.au](mailto:admin@partnersinaid.com.au) or e-mail Roger directly at [Wongarra@hotmail.com](mailto:Wongarra@hotmail.com) to request your oil painting.

We ask that you make a donation (however much you'd like) to PIA in exchange for the oil painting.

## VOLUNTEER & FUNDRAISING OPPORTUNITIES

Would you like to help increase our impact by volunteering with Partners in Aid's Marketing & Fundraising Sub-Committee? Please get in touch at [admin@partnersinaid.org.au](mailto:admin@partnersinaid.org.au) if you are interested.

We also encourage our supporters and members to undertake their own fundraising activities. Please contact us at [admin@partnersinaid.com.au](mailto:admin@partnersinaid.com.au) if you have any ideas and we can see how we can support you. Some ideas include:

- Virtual trivia
- Virtual dinners or morning teas
- Raffles

## ACFID



### ACFID CODE OF CONDUCT

The ACFID Code of Conduct is a voluntary, self-regulatory sector code of good practice that aims to improve international development outcomes and increase stakeholder trust by enhancing transparency and accountability of signatory organisations. Partners in Aid is committed to the Code, of which we are a signatory and have been for many years.

If you feel Partners in Aid has breached the ACFID Code of conduct you can visit <http://www.acfid.asn.au/code-of-conduct/complaints> to make a complaint directly to ACFID.

### WHO IS ACFID?

The Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) unites Australia's non-government aid and international development organisations to strengthen their collective impact against poverty. Their vision is of a world where gross inequality within societies and between nations is reversed and extreme poverty is eradicated. Partners in Aid is proud to be associated with such an organization, the peak body for the not-for-profit aid and development sector in Australia.

### Complaints Policy

All complaints should be addressed to the Board Chair and will be treated seriously, acknowledged promptly and resolved within two months.